



U.S. Department of Commerce Standards Initiative

**Conference on U.S. Leadership
in ISO and IEC Technical Committees**

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Overview

- Agenda
 - Overview of the Standards Initiative
 - Examples of progress to date
 - Addressing ISO/IEC Concerns
 - International Standards
 - More Information

Overview of the Standards Initiative

- Launched March 19, 2003 by Secretary Don Evans
- Seeks to improve current Commerce programs and policies
- Seeks to identify new opportunities and better ways for Commerce to work with the private sector and other USG agencies on standards-related issues, especially those affecting trade

The Standards Initiative, cont'd.

- Recognition that:
 - Standards and CA procedures can facilitate efficient international trade and its benefits OR be used intentionally or unintentionally to impede access to foreign markets.
 - Many in U.S. industry now view standards and technical regulations to be the principal non-tariff barriers in many markets around the world.

Eight Points

- Develop an Assessment of Commerce Standards Activity
- Reinforce Expertise in Key Markets
- Devise an Effective Training and Outreach Program
- Create a “Best Practices” Database
- Expand the Early Warning System
- Partner with the President’s Export Council on Standards Leadership
- Reach out to U.S. Industry
- Appoint a Standards Liaison at ITA

Examples of progress to date

- 13 roundtables held in 2003 to gather input on standards issues as they relate to international trade
- New standards attaches trained
- Training program for ITA staff, specifically commercial officers, developed and offered
- Endorsement by the President's Export Council
- Secretary released "Standards & Competitiveness" report in May 2004

Roundtable Conclusions re ISO and IEC

- ISO and IEC issues were raised by 7 of 12 sectors covered; and in the SDO roundtable
- Some sectors feel their interests are well represented in ISO and IEC, and U.S. technology is recognized
- But others perceive that:
 - U.S. firms are disadvantaged in ISO and IEC because of the one country-one vote structure
 - ISO standards processes are unfairly weighted toward European interests; this can lead to bias
 - ISO alone offers inadequate coverage for commerce

Report Recommendations

- Overreaching Recommendations
- Improve DOC Coordination
- Commercial Service Training
- Outreach/Collaboration with Industry
- Improve Public Access to Information
- Improve Coordination with other USG Agencies
- Improve Interactions with China
- Improve Interactions with Foreign Governments
- Address Concerns about ISO and IEC
- Effective Implementation of U.S. Trade Policy
- Long Term Strategies

Addressing ISO/IEC Concerns

- Report Recommendations:
 - Work with the U.S. private sector to ensure that U.S. interests receive fair treatment in the international standards process, including ISO and IEC.
 - Support ANSI's efforts to develop and disseminate materials on ISO/IEC rules for participation.
 - Work to develop a plan that would better ensure that the intellectual property of standards developers is protected.
 - Work with ANSI to track issues raised by U.S. industry and to support ANSI's efforts to ensure fair consideration of U.S. concerns with ISO and IEC rules, procedures, and actions.

International Standards

- WTO Approach
 - Based on principles governing the process (e.g., open, transparent, consensus)
 - Not based on the type of organization writing/adopting the standards nor on a list of recognized bodies
 - Ultimately, each regulatory authority must evaluate the appropriateness of relevant documents on a case-by-case basis and be able to justify and explain its decision
 - Trading partners can also limit what they view to be acceptable for non-regulatory purposes
 - In both cases, they still are responsible, on a case-by-case basis, for their decisions

International Standards

- Some developing countries prefer to use ISO/IEC standards as the basis for their regulations
- **Relevance to this audience: TC and SC leaders need to ensure U.S. technology and other interests are fairly represented in the documents developed in their committees**

More Information

- DOC Standards Initiative Website:
 - <http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/standards/standardsmainpage.html>
- Standards and Competitiveness Report:
 - http://ts.nist.gov/ts/htdocs/210//trade_barriers_report.pdf
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